THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) and (b) The present Government wishes to give a thrust to genuine decentralisation form the Centre to the States and from States to districts and below, with responsibilities being matched by adequate resources at each level.

(c) Work in formulating the Eighth Five Year Plan is in progress. It is not possible to indicate precisely at this stage a date for finalisation of implementation.

Changes in the Atomic Energy policy

166. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Atomic Energy policy, pursued by the previous Government has been reviewed by the new Government and found to be appropriate to the needs of the country; and

(b) if not, what changes are being contemplated therein by the present Government?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) and (b) The atomic energy policy of the country is a well conceived national policy and has seved the country's interests well. Government propose to continue the present policy.

Resentment against setting up Central University in Barak Valley in Assam

167. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Assam Government have expressed against establishment of the Central University in Barak Valley under the Assam University Act, 1989 passed by Parliament in May-June 1989; and

(b) if so, what steps Government are contemplating to implement the provisions of the said Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PROF. M. G. K. MENON): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The matter is under consideration.

Drop out rate at primary and high schools levels

168. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the drop out rate of primary and high schools levels in the country among the students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and girls , separately, as on 30th November, 1989; and

(b) what steps are being taken to check the drop out rate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PROF. M. G. K. MENON): (a) According to the latest information available with the Ministry, drop out rate at Primary (Class I-V), Middle (Class I-VIII) and High School (Class I-X) for 1986-87 is as follows:

	Girls	SC	ST
Class I—V	51·9	50·2	64.3
Class I—III	70·0	67·8	80·7
Class I—X	81·3	79·0	87·2

(b) A wide range of programmes is required in order in make an impact on the situation. The National Policy on Education 1986 gives very high priority to solving the problem of children dropping out of school and recommends adoption of an array of meticulously formulated strategies based on micro-planning and applied at the grass-roots level all over the country, to ensure children's retention at school.

Three centrally assisted schemes have been started to (i) provide minimum essential facilities to improve primary schools through 'Operation Blackboard' (ii) strengthening and reorganisation of the Non-Formal Education Programme to provide education to school drop-outs, children from habitations without schools, girls who cannot attend whole day schools and working children (iii) reorganise and restructure Teacher Education including establishment of District Institutes of Education and Training to increase teacher competence and provide academic support. In addition, new text books in accordance with the National Policy on Education, 1986 are being developed upto elementary level in a time bound programme by NCERT and State Governments. Various incentive programmes like free supply of uniforms to girls students, free mid-day meals, free text books and attendance scholarships are being implemented by the State Governmens/UT Administrations in the State Sector.

Induction of F-7 Aircraft by Pakistan

169. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the Pak move to induct F-7 aircraft acqiured from China; and

(b) if so, the action Government propose to take to further strengthen India's defence?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI VSHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) All developments having a bearing on India's security are kept under constant review by the Government and all necessary measures taken to safeguard it.

Reviewing the public distribution system in the country

170. SHRI NARESH C. PUGLIA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to review the public distriubtion system in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether Government propose to include more items for sale through fair price shops; and

(d) if so, what are the details of these items?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI NATHU RAM MIRDHA): (a) and (b) The administration of the Public Distribution System is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/UT Administrations. Powers under the Essential Commodities Act and other similar legislations vest with them.

Efforts are made on a continual basis to strengthen and streamline the system. Guidelines have been issued to State Governmnet/UT Administrations from time to time advising them regarding effective coordination among the agencies engaged in PDS, involvement of consumers' representatives in the vigil on its functioning, strict enforcement of the provisions of law, better coverage of population, introduction of mobile shops, etc. The Central Government also provides assistance to State Govts/UT Administrations underselected schemes for remote and hilly areas.

(c) and (d) The States and Union Territories have also been advised from time to time to include more items of mass consumption for sale through fair price shops. Several State have included additional items such as pulses, tea, salt, soap, matches, coarse, grains etc. for distribution through fair price shops.